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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA  
ALSO FOR PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/01/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#)  
SUBJECT: UNRWA HEAD ABU ZAYD ON CURRENT SITUATION

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner General Karen Abu Zayd told Consul General on May 1, in advance of her upcoming trip to Washington, that the situation in Gaza is worsening due to the general deterioration of the Palestinian economy, exacerbated by the non-payment of salaries to PA employees. She cited PA employees as a new class of needy, with UNRWA being asked for jobs and services by Palestinians who had not previously relied on UNRWA. Abu Zayd said that UNRWA is maintaining an approximately 6-day supply of food, down from previous stockpiles, and voiced her concern about the ability to get goods into Gaza. In the West Bank, Abu Zayd said she saw increasing frustration at growing numbers of IDF checkpoints and other movement restrictions.

12. (C) Abu Zayd expressed concern about the growing demands on UNRWA to meet the needs of "thousand of new families." She described UNRWA as being "caught between the old PA and the new PA," between those long-standing contacts with whom UNRWA has long done business, and the new Hamas ministers who are overwhelmed at the magnitude of the challenges facing them. In response to a question from the Consul General, Abu Zayd said she had not met PA ministers in the new government and continued to work primarily through the PLO Department of Refugee Affairs. Regarding security, Abu Zayd said UNRWA workers did not feel particularly threatened - if anything, they felt more welcomed than before - but worried about the possibility of rising civil disorder stemming from the presence of thousands of armed people without salaries. She thought that PA comments over the last several days about pending payments from the Arab League to PA employees were misleading, and said that individual PA ministers appeared to be raising expectations by telling their employees to expect their salaries soon.

13. (C) Abu Zayd said she said would meet later on May 1 with Israeli Foreign Minister Livni and that she looked forward to meeting USG officials in Washington and discussing US policy towards the PA and U.S. expectations for UNRWA.  
WALLES